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OKO 15 Gridiron Club

NEEDLES FOR NOTABLES

The Great Society Is Lampooned

by the Gridiron Club

The Gridiron Club hailed the Great Society last night and, before the 80th annual white-tie affair was over, Democrats, Republicans and political figures around the world had impartially shared the newspaper organization's sharp satirical needle.

As some 500 "Who's Who" guests dined on fish chowder, terrapin, fillet of beef and asparagus vinaigrette, the men who cover Washington twitted the administration for its war on poverty, its old New Deal advisers and its LBJ brand. Robert Kennedy was pictured polishing up a Texas accent.

The GOP, in song and skit, celebrated its "March Through Georgia" and the good luck of those candidates not selected to run against President Johnson last year. Due note was taken of a rapid turnover among Republican national chairmen and House Leaders. A make-believe Barry Goldwater cheerfully contemplated his retirement.

Foreign dignitaries, including U Thant, Nasser, Sukarno and De Gaulle, got a crisp toasting. So did USIA libraries. The Multinational Force experienced language difficulties. Authorities in Saigon, it was recalled, had proved that they certainly can can Khanh.

Guests of the 50 club members at Washington's Statler Hilton Hotel constituted a top-level slice of the political, military, diplomatic, journalistic and business communities. They included Vice President Hubert Humphrey, Cabinet officers, Supreme Court justices and Ambassadors of foreign nations.

As always at Gridiron dinners, only one

toast was proposed, to the President of the United States.

The speeches of the Vice President and Mr. Goldwater, representing respectively the Democratic and Republican parties, were off the record, in keeping with the tradition that at Gridiron dinners "reporters are never present."

Gridiron President Frederic W. Collins of the Ridder Publications set the tone of the evening with his opening "speech in the dark," which poked fun at current troubles ranging from civil rights demonstrations to disputes over rapid transit.

"Two weeks ago," Collins reported, "the White House was chiefly worried about dropouts. Now it's worried about drop-ins."

Collins continued: "Despite some disorders abroad, the United States continues to cooperate with countries that give us a hard time. It is building its embassies only a stone's throw from riot headquarters. We've abandoned the no-win policy. Now it's no windows."

Referring to frequent changes of government in South Vietnam, the club president said: "The situation there is really a tribute to American television commercials. They'd rather we fight while they switch."

Senator Fulbright, it was recalled, has urged American tourists to conserve dollars by avoiding the fleshpots of Paris. "If he has his way," Collins added, "50 million Americans can't go wrong."

In the Gridiron tradition, foreign affairs was surveyed in the last skit, set in the harmonious confines of the United Nations Deadbeat Club, where a quartette was discovered singing:

Sweet Ad-e-lai

Our Ad-e-lai.

Though we're in debt,

We will not pay.

We at U.N.

Bet one to ten,

You're the one who's going to pay,

Sweet Ad-e-lai.

The bartender, U Thant, greeted two guests. "Hello, President Nasser," he said. "So long, President Sukarno." Egypt's Nasser got a glass of Manischewitz — Indonesia's Sukarno a Malaysian Gin Sling. U Thant wanted to know who was going to pay for the drinks.

"Eventually," he was told, "the U.S. foreign aid program."

To the music of "Side By Side," Nasser and Sukarno sang:

Oh, our people are ragged and skinny,

Wealthiest haven't a guinea.

So we riot along, kicking the gong,

Side by side.

Our only export is static,

Both of us are charismatic,

So happy are we,

Off on a spree,

Side by side.

Through all kinds of weather

What if the bomb should fall?

Just as long as we're together.

It doesn't matter at all.

When we tire of work at our labors,

We go and pick on our neighbors,

See the Yemeni run!

Malaysia's done!

Side by side.

U Thant saw more trouble approaching, "those drunken sailors from Chancellor Ludwig Erhard's multilingual, multilateral,

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